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Middle East

SECRET UNCLASSIFIED SECURITY INFORMATION

August 20, 1952

TO: G - Mr. Matthews

VIA: S/S

FROM: NEA - Mr. Byroade

DECLASSIFICATION DATE 6/28/78
PER NB NOTES OFFICE NEA
720115

SUBJECT: Middle East Defense Organization

Discussion:

The Department has received a letter from the Secretary of Defense dated August 11, 1952 (Tab A) forwarding JCS comments on the UK proposals for a Middle East Defense Organization and setting forth certain elements which in the view by the JCS, should be reflected in any US position on the MEDO. The Secretary of Defense suggests that this memorandum should be discussed between a representative of the Department and Mr. Frank Nash of his office. The attached letter to the Secretary of Defense indicates that I will represent the Department in the proposed discussion with Mr. Nash.

The position of the Joint Chiefs as set forth in paragraph 3 of their memorandum incorporates certain points made in memoranda to the JCS by the Army Chief of Staff and the Joint Strategic Survey Committee, copies of which were informally handed to the Department some weeks ago. The Department's position on these points was developed in two memoranda dated July 7, 1952 (Tab B) which were handed informally to General Cabell. In discussion with Mr. Nash I would plan to restate this position, with slight modification, making the following points (numbering is keyed to that of the JCS memorandum):

3(a) The Department agrees.

(b) The Department is in substantial agreement except that we do not consider the proposal in sub-paragraph (3) acceptable. Given all the factors in the situation, we are convinced that it is necessary to defer the establishment of a Steering Group until the MEDO is firmly established. In the meantime necessary coordination and direction of the operations of the organization should be provided by means of ad hoc arrangements.

(c) The Department

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEWED BY WOLF JR DATE 6/1/82
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(c) The Department agrees.

(d) We are not entirely clear as to the implications and the intent of this proposal. Since Defense considers that it is desirable on military grounds to establish a Planning Group even without Arab participation, we agree to this position. However, the proposal to establish a Middle East defense council comprising Middle East and Western States "to study the over-all problem of a cooperative defense for this area", seems to be based on a political judgment that the Arab States would be more likely to accept this arrangement than the MEDO proposal. We do not agree with this judgment and feel that the adoption at this stage of the JCS proposal would create a certain amount of confusion. Defense should be asked to clarify the concept and unless there are considerations which have escaped us, we would hope to persuade them to abandon the proposal.

The letter to the Secretary of Defense also transmits a copy of a French Aide-Memoire on the UK memorandum. The letter points out that the French proposal that the NATO Standing Group should serve as the directing organ for MEDO, is in conflict with the JCS position on this matter and suggests the desirability of arranging for a discussion of this subject with the French and British with a view to settling it before it is thrown into the wider exchange of views among the seven sponsors. Since military considerations are primarily involved in this matter, and since Defense has strong views on the subject, it would be desirable to have Defense assume primary responsibility for presenting the US view in such a discussion.

Recommendation:

(1) That you sign the attached letter to the Secretary of Defense.

(2) That you approve the general position set forth above for use in discussion with Mr. Nash.

Concurrences:

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Middle East

AUG 25 1952

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My dear Mr. Secretary:

I refer to the letter from the Deputy Secretary of Defense of August 11, 1952 forwarding a copy of the Joint Chiefs of Staff memorandum dated July 29, 1952 on the subject of the Middle East Defense Organization and stating that Mr. Frank Nash is prepared to discuss the points covered in the memorandum with a representative of the Department of State. I have requested Mr. Henry Byroade, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs to represent the Department of State in the proposed discussion of the memorandum with Mr. Nash.

I am forwarding with this letter a translation of an Aide-Memoire, attached on the British memorandum which has been handed to the Department of State by an officer of the French Embassy, and in which the French reassert their position that the MEDO should receive its directives from and report to the NATO Standing Group. This proposal is, of course, in direct conflict with the position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as stated in paragraph 3b (2) of their memorandum of July 29, 1952 — a position with which the Department of State is of course in agreement. This Department considers that it would be desirable to dispose of this issue before the French position enters into the general exchange of views among the seven sponsors, and that for this purpose it might be desirable to arrange for a discussion of the specific question with the French and British in the very near future. Mr. Byroade will wish to include this question among the points he discusses with Mr. Nash.

Sincerely yours,

For the Secretary of State:

H. Freeman Matthews
Deputy Under Secretary

Enclosure:

Translation of Aide-Memoire.

The Honorable
Robert A. Lovett,
Secretary of Defense.

NEA:ABDaspit:cms 8-20-52

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Division of Language Services

See letter dated 9/22 to Defense encl. enclosed reply to French.

TC NO.
55203
T-39/T-19/R-IV

JPB/MTC

August 15, 1952

Middle East

No. 461

The Embassy of France in the United States presents its compliments to the Department of State and has the honor to transmit to it herewith, for its information, the text of an aide-memoire delivered to the Charge d'Affaires of Great Britain in Paris, in reply to the British memorandum, dated August 7, relating to the plans for organizing the defense of the Near East.

French Aide Memoir re MEDO

The remarks set forth in the enclosed aide-memoire are of a preliminary nature. The French Government considers that the proposals formulated in the British memorandum constitute a basis for discussions, and it reserves the right, should the occasion arise, to assert at the proper time its position with respect to other points.

The Embassy avails itself of the occasion of the present communication to renew to the Department of State the assurances of its very high consideration.

Department of State,

Washington, D. C.

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JPD/MTC August 15, 1952

Aide-memoire delivered to the Charge d'Affaires of Great Britain at Paris.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents its compliments to the Embassy of Great Britain and, referring to the Embassy's memorandum dated the seventh of this month on the organization of the defense of the Middle East, has the honor to inform it of the following: The French Government has learned with keen interest of the proposals of the British Government which it considers to be an important contribution to the setting up of a defense organization for the Middle East area. It is pleased with this step, which will provide the various countries concerned with a basis for constructive discussions. It again affirms its intention to lend its fullest cooperation to the work thus undertaken, in the conviction that the security of the Middle East is indissolubly bound up with that of all free nations.

Within the framework of the exchange of views contemplated by the covering aide-memoire transmitted by the Embassy of Great Britain, the French Government desires to present at this time certain preliminary observations regarding points which, in its opinion, it might be desirable to clarify.

I. The French Government has frequently had occasion to stress the importance which it attaches to the establishment of close liaison between the entity which would be charged with organizing the defense of the Middle East and the appropriate services of NATO; its point of view on this subject, as well as the arguments on which its opinion is based are, therefore, well known to the British government. It will therefore limit itself to recalling here one consideration which appears to it to be essential, namely, that the apportionment of the means to be employed for assuring both the defense of the Atlantic Community and the

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defense of the Middle East requires a coordination of the plans drawn up for these two areas which are geographically and strategically linked to each other. Such coordination, in its opinion, can be assured only by the Standing Group.

Therefore the French Government can not give its consent to any formula which would not state very clearly that the organization contemplated for the Middle East will receive directives from the Permanent Standing Group and will report to it concerning its activities, it being understood that the members of the Standing Group would be, with respect to the matter, competent intuitu personae.

2. The French Government reserves the right to examine more in detail the mechanism of the planning organization (paragraphs 5 and 8 of the British memorandum). It seems to it at this time, however, that there might be disadvantages in having the members of the planning group receive, on the same footing as the military representatives, their instructions from their respective governments. Would it not be more logical to envisage that these governments would send all pertinent directives to the military representatives, and that the planning group would work under the authority and supervision of the latter?

The French Government also wishes to state that, in its opinion, the representatives of the various countries concerned who are members of the planning group must take account of the general interests of those countries in the Mediterranean Basin as a whole and in the more distant regions whose lines of communication pass through the region of the Middle East. It expects that, in this connection, the position of France will be fully taken into consideration. It recalls that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain and the Secretary of State of the United States recognized this particular situation, especially at Ottawa in September 1951, when it was agreed that the Supreme Commander for the Middle East would have at his disposal a French assistant, with the rank of Major General or of Vice Admiral.

3. The French

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3. The French Government wonders whether it is advisable, at least at the present stage, to entrust to the planning organization the task of co-ordinating the requests of the States of the Middle East in the matter of arms and equipment (paragraph 4, subparagraph C, of the British memorandum). Actually, that task is being satisfactorily performed by a recently created committee sitting in Washington. The French Government considers it preferable not to make, for the time being, any change whatever in that procedure. The planning organization could thus devote itself more fully to its essential mission.

4. The French Government understands the reasons for which the participation of the State of Israel in the projected organization would not, for the time being, be desirable. It hopes, however, that the Government of Israel will be informed of the discussions under way and that the means can be found to keep it currently informed, at least in a general way, on the studies undertaken by the organization and the conclusions to which those studies make it possible to arrive.

Since the foregoing remarks concern, in part, only the United States, Great Britain, and France, the French Government will refrain from communicating them to the other host Powers. Indeed, it considers that, particularly on the points covered in paragraphs 1 and 3 above, an agreement should be entered into by the three Governments, and the exchanges of views to that end could be effected through diplomatic channels.

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